

Docket No. AUS920010398US1

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method for distributing information in a computer
5 network, the method comprising:
dividing an electronic file into a plurality of
pieces;
receiving a request for a file piece from a first
client machine;
10 downloading the requested file piece to the first
client machine;
receiving a request for said file piece from a
second client machine; and
redirecting the request of the second client machine
15 to the first client machine.
2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising:
downloading all file pieces to a plurality of client
machines, wherein the client machines function as
20 peer-to-peer servers for other client machines requesting
said file pieces.
3. The method according to claim 2, wherein each
peer-to-peer server stores a unique file piece.
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4. The method according to claim 2, further comprising:
receiving a request for a file piece stored in a
first peer-to-peer server which is no longer connected to
the computer network;

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redirecting said request to a second peer-to-peer server containing a copy of said file piece; and removing the first peer-to-peer server from a list of available peer-to-peer servers.

5. The method according to claim 2, further comprising:
sending a digest for a file piece to each client
machine which has received that file piece.

disconnecting the peer-to-peer server responsible
15 for corrupting said file piece; and
retransmitting said file piece to said client,
wherein the retransmitted file piece is free of any
corrupting content.

25 receiving the requested file piece from the server;
 receiving a request for said file piece from a
 client machine, wherein the request is redirected from
 the server; and

sending said file piece to said client machine.

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8. A method for obtaining distributed information in a computer network, the method comprising:

requesting one of a plurality of pieces of an electronic file, wherein the electronic file is stored in
5 a server;

receiving the requested file piece from a client machine containing a copy of said file piece.

9. A computer program product in a computer readable
10 medium for use in a data processing system, for distributing information in a computer network, the computer program product comprising:

instructions for dividing an electronic file into a plurality of pieces;

15 instructions for receiving a request for a file piece from a first client machine;

instructions for downloading the requested file piece to the first client machine;

20 instructions for receiving a request for said file piece from a second client machine; and

instructions for redirecting the request of the second client machine to the first client machine.

10. The computer program product according to claim 9,
25 further comprising:

instructions for downloading all file pieces to a plurality of client machines, wherein the client machines function as peer-to-peer servers for other client machines requesting said file pieces.

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11. The computer program product according to claim 10, wherein each peer-to-peer server stores a unique file piece.

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12. The computer program product according to claim 10, further comprising:

instructions for receiving a request for a file piece stored in a first peer-to-peer server which is no longer connected to the computer network;

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instructions for redirecting said request to a second peer-to-peer server containing a copy of said file piece; and

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instructions for removing the first peer-to-peer server from a list of available peer-to-peer servers.

13. The computer program product according to claim 10, further comprising:

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instructions for sending a digest for a file piece to each client machine which has received that file piece.

14. The computer program product according to claim 13, further comprising:

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instructions for receiving a message from a client, wherein the message indicates that a peer-to-peer server has corrupted a file piece;

instructions for disconnecting the peer-to-peer server responsible for corrupting said file piece; and

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instructions for retransmitting said file piece to said client, wherein the retransmitted file piece is free of any corrupting content.

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15. A computer program product for distributing information in a computer network, the method comprising:

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        instructions for receiving the requested file piece
from the server;

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instructions for sending said file piece to said client machine.

instructions for requesting one of a plurality of pieces of an electronic file, wherein the electronic file is stored in a server;

17. A system for distributing information in a computer network, the system comprising:

a dividing component which divides an electronic file into a plurality of pieces;

a first receiver which receives a request for a file piece from a first client machine;

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30         a communications component which downloads the
        requested file piece to the first client machine;

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a second receiver which receives a request for said

a first communications component which requests one of a plurality of pieces of an electronic file, wherein the electronic file is stored in a server;

a second receiver which receives a request for said file piece from a client machine, wherein the request is redirected from the server; and

19. A system for obtaining distributed information in a computer network, the system comprising:

a receiver which receives the requested file piece from a client machine containing a copy of said file piece.